



MYTH vs. REALITY: FAQ

HEAR IT FOR YOURSELF!

Start at 1:16:00 and Listen to Appropriations Committee TEA Commissioner's Testimony Regarding the Breakdown of All Funds Per Students in Texas from Tuesday, February 19, 2025.

MISCONCEPTION #1

“Student Funding: Public school funding per student is not just \$6k, as many people have been led to believe. Texas has approximately 5,500,000 students in Public Schools with an annual budget of \$92.6 B. Thus, **public schools will receive approximately \$16k per student.** For a source, please see this chart from TEA.”

REALITY

While the total amount of funding per student may appear to be around \$15,905, much of this money cannot be used for daily school operations. The actual amount available for running schools—covering teacher pay, classroom instruction, and inflation—is significantly less. Here's why:

THREE EXAMPLES OF FUNDS INCLUDED IN THE \$15,905 PER STUDENT NUMBER

Debt Services Funds (\$2,436 per student)

- o These funds come from local taxpayer-approved bonds used to build and renovate school buildings.
- o They cannot be used for teacher salaries, classroom instruction, or operational costs like security and maintenance.

One-Time COVID Relief Federal Funds (\$2,568 per student)

- o A portion of the reported per-student funding came from temporary federal COVID relief funds (not state funds).
- o These funds were designed for emergency use during the pandemic and are no longer available for schools moving forward.
- o They were used for pandemic-related expenses like virtual learning, safety measures, and student support services.

Teacher Retirement System (TRS) Contributions (\$487 per student)

- o This amount is an accounting adjustment, not actual cash that schools receive.
- o TRS contributions are funds allocated to cover future teacher retirement benefits, meaning schools cannot use this money for salaries or classroom expenses today.

What Is The Real Amount Available for Daily Operations?

When the restricted funds are removed, Texas public schools receive approximately \$10,414 per student for their day-to-day operations.

This includes:

- Teacher salaries and benefits
- Classroom materials and technology
- Student programs and services
- Operational costs like utilities and maintenance

How Does This Compare to Rockwall ISD?

Rockwall ISD receives less than the state average for operational funding.

- In 2022-2023, Rockwall ISD received just over \$8,584 per student for daily expenses.
- This means Rockwall ISD has to stretch its funding further to provide high-quality education while covering increasing costs like teacher salaries, classroom resources, and inflation.

BOTTOM LINE:

While the total reported per-student funding is close to \$16,000, much of it cannot be used for classroom instruction or teacher pay. The real number available for operating schools is significantly lower, with Rockwall ISD receiving even less than the state average.